

Market Monitoring and Redressal for the Month of December, 2022

A. Enforcement and Redressal

In December 2022, the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA), [erstwhile Office of Consumer Protection (OCP)] received nine individual consumer complaints, of which eight were resolved, while one pending case is still being investigated in collaboration with the Regional Office of Economic Affairs (ROEA) in Mongar.

Majority of the complaints are with regard to inflation of price of goods and services. Furthermore, with the enactment of the Tax Act of Bhutan, 2022; wherein customs duty and/ or sales tax of more than 140 goods were reduced to ease inflationary pressure on the consumers. This included cereals, edible oils, pulses and milk powder. To ensure that consumers are benefitting from these tax revisions, market monitoring has been stepped up starting towards the end of December, to find out if businesses have reduced prices for these groups of commodities.

Fig 1: Number of complaints received and resolved

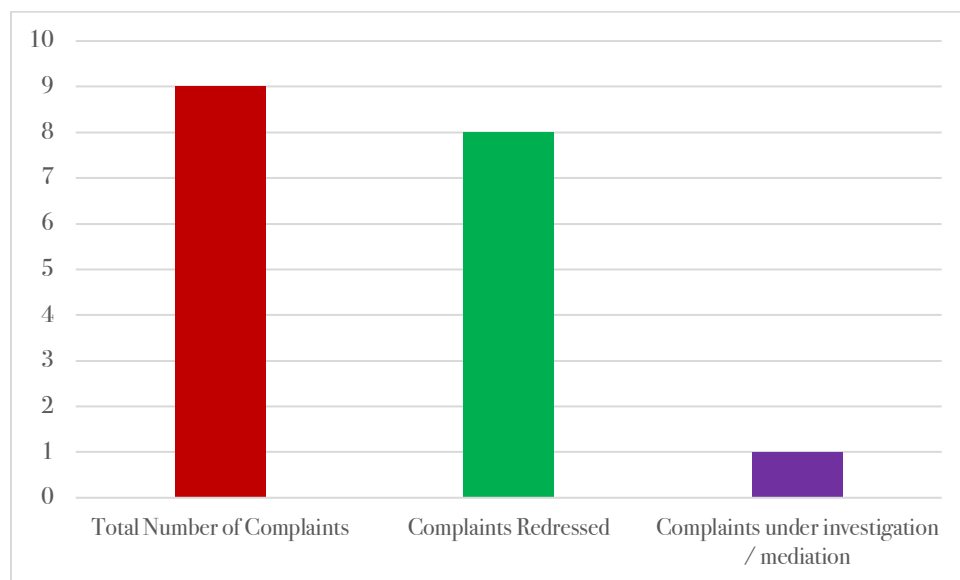
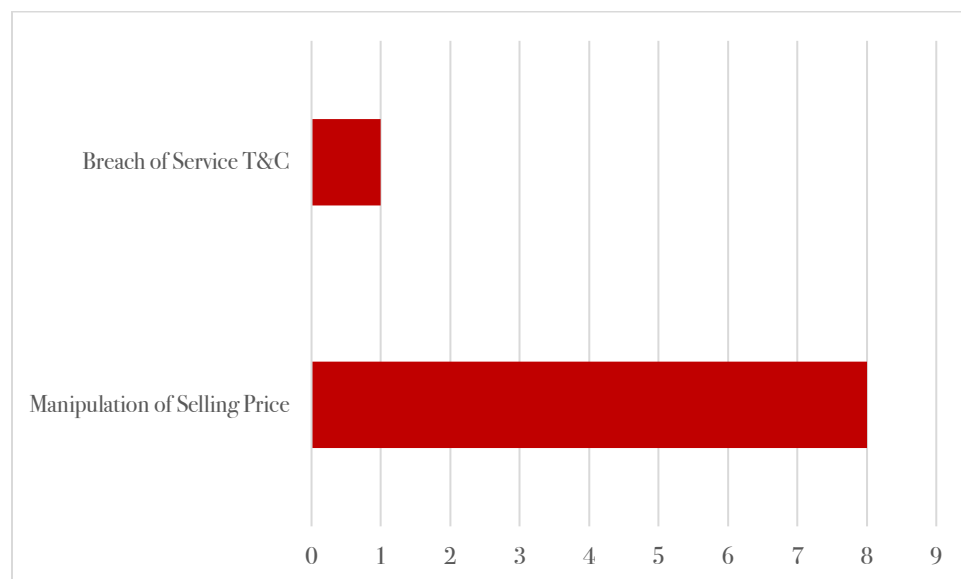


Fig. II. Number of complaints by nature of violation



B. Market Surveillance- Wangdiphodrang, Punkha & Zhemgang Dzongkhags

A total of 91 businesses in Wangduephodrang, Punakha and Zhemgang were inspected during December - comprising 63 groceries, 5 Petroleum Retail Outlet (PRO), 5 meat shops, and 18 automobile workshops (Tab. 1).

Table 1: Number of business entities inspected during December 2022

#	Dzongkhag	Market(s)	Grocery	PRO	Meat Shops	Automobile workshops
1	Wangdiphodrang	Bajo, Rinchengang, Langley Tsawa & Baychu	36	2	5	5
2	Punakha	Lobesa	0	0	0	13
3	Zhemgang	Buli, Panbang, Tingtibi & Zhemgang town	27	3	0	0

During the inspection, it was observed that none of the shops using valid Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB) calibrated weighing machines. While more than 70 percent of the grocery stores provide purchase receipts, compliance to product labeling is low (22.5 %) because groceries stock locally produced agricultural and livestock products, which are packaged in commonly available polyethylene

or polypropylene bags without minimum prescribed labels. More than 65 % of grocery stores display proper retail selling prices.

Of the 5 PROs visited, they are compliant to all the minimum standards and safety requirements as prescribed in the Guidelines on the Storage, Handling and Dispensing at Petroleum Retail Outlets, 2022; while only around 44 % of automobile workshops were found complying to proper price display. Likewise, only 40 % of meat shops had proper price displays in their establishment.

C. Complaint Redressal by the Dispute Settlement Committee (DSC)

A consumer dispute between a Gelephu-based business entity and a Thimphu resident was forwarded to the Dispute Settlement Committee (DSC), Gelephu, after the office could not mediate their dispute. In line with the Consumer Protection Rules & Regulation, 2015, the DSC ruled the business entity provide a refund of Nu. 284,000/- and also pay an additional compensation of Nu. 33,500/- to the complainant.

D. Conclusion

The CCAA strives to provide consumer protection services and support business entities where necessary, in addition to encouraging compliance by businesses to regulatory requirements to improve consumers' experiences and welfare.

For availing consumer protection service or if you wish to report any unfair trade practice in the marketplaces, kindly contact the office either by calling [1214 \(Toll-free\)](tel:1214), emailing at ocp@moea.gov.bt or submitting an online complaint using www.ocp.gov.bt or by visiting our office during working hours.

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